



MINUTES
OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
Special Meeting
May 25, 2010

MEMBERS, OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL
Mr. Reg Dexter, District V, Council Chairman
Mr. Joel Thrift, District IV, Vice Chairman
Mr. Wayne McCall, District II, Chairman Pro Tem
Mr. Paul Corbeil, District I
Mr. Mario Suarez, District III

Oconee County Council met on Tuesday, May 25, 2010 at 6:00 PM in Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC with all Council Members, Gene Klugh Interim Administrator, Kendra Brown Assistant County Administrator and Elizabeth G. Hulse, Clerk to Council.

Press:

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, notice of the meeting, date, time, place of meeting and agenda were posted on the bulletin board at the County Administrative Offices, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC, and the County Council website [www.oconeese.com/council]. In addition it was made available to the newspapers, radio stations, television stations and concerned citizens.

Member of the press present: Dick Mangrum – WGOG, Ray Chandler – Anderson Independent, Ashton Hester – Keowee Courier, and Carlos Galarza - Daily Journal.

Call to Order:

Mr. Dexter called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Public Hearing regarding Ordinances:

Ordinance 2010-11: “AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH THE BUDGET FOR OCONEE COUNTY AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE LEVY OF TAXES FOR ORDINARY COUNTY PURPOSES IN OCONEE COUNTY FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2010 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2011”

Ordinance 2010-12: “AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH THE BUDGET FOR THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF OCONEE COUNTY AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE LEVY OF TAXES FOR THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF OCONEE COUNTY FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2010 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2011” OF OCONEE COUNTY FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2010 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2011”

Ordinance 2010-13: “AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR THE LEVY OF TAXES FOR THE KEOWEE FIRE SPECIAL TAX DISTRICT AND TO ESTABLISH THE BUDGET FOR THE KEOWEE FIRE SPECIAL TAX DISTRICT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2010 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2011”

Mr. Dexter opened the Public Hearing stating that those who signed up for comment may speak about any or all of the ordinances during their presentations. In addition, Mr. Dexter solicited written comments from any citizens wishing to have their comments made a part of the permanent record.

Mr. Tim Callahan addressed Council requesting that a funding request for \$5,000 be considered by Council for Our Daily Bread in Seneca.

Mr. Robert Gamble, Public Defender's Office addressed Council requesting an increase in their funding [in a written statement filed with these minutes] in an equal amount to the increase in the Solicitor's Office plus \$60,000 to cover an expected budget shortfall for the Oconee County office. Discussion followed with Council.

Mr. Gamble was instructed to provide to the Clerk to Council [1] an accounting of his revenues and expenditures for the Oconee County Public Defender's office, and [2] an accounting of both the number of citizens assisted by his office and the number of charges they faced for each court appearance so that they can be accurately compared with numbers provided by the Solicitor's office.

Mr. C. W. Richards addressed Council requesting delaying third reading of the budget ordinance to allow the new administrator time to review and provide input.

Mr. Bo Horne addressed Council utilizing a PowerPoint presentation [filed with these minutes] voicing concerns about capital project spending and an insufficient reduction in the operating budget.

Ms. Susie Cornelius requested that the Clerk to Council read into the record prepared comments [filed with these minutes].

Mr. Dexter opened the floor to any citizen who had not previously signed up to speak.

Mr. Jess Neville, Fire Commission Chair, addressed Council reading from portions of a letter from Larry Wilkerson, Oconee Fire Chief's Association President [filed with these minutes], offering a short term solution to the fire coverage for the unincorporated areas surrounding the City of Seneca. Mr. Neville stated clearly that the proposal should not reflect negatively on the firefighters in the City of Seneca. Discussion followed with Council.

Mr. Dexter questioned Mr. Neville regarding the cost of the short term proposal i.e., as it relates to housing, equipment, etc. Mr. Corbeil stated that the intent of Council to bring all interested parties to the table to help the County identify a long term fire protection plan for Oconee County by December 31, 2010.

Mr. Neville stated that he was confident that all of the volunteers would support the one year fire contract with Seneca with the understanding that a permanent long term fire plan would be developed by April 15, 2011.

Mr. John Kelly, Interim Fire Chief Walhalla, addressed Council stating that the City is considering requesting a contact with the County where the city would pay the county to provide fire protection within the municipality. Discussion followed.

Mr. Dexter opened the floor to any citizen wishing to submit written comments.

No additional written or oral comments were made.

Mr. Dexter closed the public hearing regarding Ordinances #2010-11, #2010-12 and #2010-13.

Adjourn:

Mr. Thrift made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved unanimously approved to adjourn at 7:12 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Elizabeth G. Hulse
Clerk to Council